

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 8382

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PO

SUBJECT: VISIT OF SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE LIBERATION

1. SUMMARY. DR. MIGUEL DA GRACA OF THE COMMITTEE OF LIBERATION OF SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE HAS ASKED THROUGH EMBASSY BRUSSELS FOR US ASSISTANCE FOR HIMSELF AND HIS COMMITTEE. END SUMMARY.

2. THE EMBASSY WAS VISITED OCTOBER 21 BY DR. MIGUEL DA GRACA, A NATIVE OF SAO TOME AND A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE OF LIBERATION OF SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE ISLANDS. DA GRACA IS PRESENTLY SERVING AS DIRECTOR OF PLANNING IN THE GOBONESE MINISTRY OF PLANNING IN LIBREVILLE, WHERE HE IS IN EXILE. HE HAS COME TO BRUSSELS TO DISCUSS GABON'S RELATIONS WITH THE EEC. DA GRACA WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MARIO BEAULIEU, WHO IS A HAITIAN LIVING IN BRUSSELS AND DA GRACA'S "PERSONAL ADVISOR." IN OUR CONVERSATION AND IN A SUBSEQUENT LETTER, DATED OCTOBER 23, DA GRACA ASKED FOR US "POLITICAL, FINANCIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL" ASSISTANCE FOR HIS MOVEMENT AND FOR HIMSELF. HE ALSO EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE US WOULD PUSH PORTUGAL TO MOVE MORE QUICKLY TOWARD GRANTING INDEPENDENCE TO SAO TOME AND

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PRINCIPE. IN HIS LETTER DA GRACA SAID THAT HE HAD DECIDED

"WITH A MAJORITY OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE" TO COOPERATE CLOSELY WITH THE US. HE CLAIMED TO HAVE ALREADY ATTAINED THE BACKING OF THE "MILITARY CHIEF OF SAO TOME," CAPTIAN NETO.

3. DESCRIBING HIMSELF AS A MODERATE AND A LIBERAL, DA GRACA SAID HE SOUGHT US SUPPORT IN ORDER TO BLOCK THE ACCESSION TO POWER IN HIS COMMITTEE AND EVENTUALLY IN THE INDEPENDENT ISLAND STATE OF ELEMENTS FROM THE EXTREME LEFT. FUTURE LEADERSHIP OF THE MOVEMENT IS AN OPEN QUESTION. DA GRACA SAID THAT THE COMMITTEE IS HEADED AT PRESENT BY A MAN NAMED DA COSTA, WHO IS DA GRACA'S SUBORDINATE IN THE GABONESE MINISTRY FOR PLANNING, BUT THAT DA COSTA HAD TOLD HIM PRIVATELY THAT HE WAS NOT INTERESTED IN BECOMING PRESIDENT OF THE NEW STATE AND WOULD STEP DOWN BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. ACCORDING TO DA GRACA, LEADERSHIP COULD PASS TO HIS OWN OLDER BROTHER, A DOCTOR IN LIBREVILLE, BUT HE DOES NOT HAVE A TASTE OR FLAIR FOR POLITICS. ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE MOVEMENT WHO SEEKS LEADERSHIP IS GASTAO TORRES, WHO LIVES IN LISBON AND WHO FREQUENTLY VISITS SAO TOME. DA GRACA DESCRIBED TORRES AS A DANGEROUS, EXTREME-LEFTIST WHO HAS STIRRED UP TROUBLE, PARTICULARLY LABOR UNREST IS SAO TOME AND FROM WHOM THE COMMITTEE HAS WITHDRAWN ANY MANDATE TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE PORTUGUESE.

4. ACCORDING TO DA GRACA'S ACCOUNT, HE HAS SOLICITED THE SUPPORT OF THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT, WHICH OFFERED "POLITICAL HELP TO CONSTRUCT THAT DEMOCRATIC AND LIBERAL SYSTEM OF MY COUNTRY." HE ALSO CALLED AT THE EMBASSY OF SOUTH AFRICA HERE. RECENTLY IN LISBON HE HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH COLONEL SILVA SEBASTIAO (99 RUA RODRIGO DA FONSECA, LISBON), WHOM HE DESCRIBED AS A FORMER GOVERNOR OF SAO TOME. HE ALSO VISITED THE US, WHERE BEAULIEU PUT HIM IN CONTACT WITH RICHARD T. SPRADLIN, A LAWYER AT 815 CONNECTICUT AVENUE IN WASHINGTON. BEAULIEU SPOKE TO US STRONGLY OF DA GRACA'S LIBERAL CREDENTIALS AND SAID IN PARTING, "THIS IS THE MAN FOR US TO BACK." BOTH MEN STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE TO THE WEST OF THE STRATEGIC LOCATION

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OF SAO TOME AND PRINCIPE AND THEIR POTENTIAL FOR OFF-SHORE OIL. WE POINTED OUT THAT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT COULD NOT BECOME INVOLVED IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES, BUT SAID THAT WE COULD REPORT THEIR VISIT.

5. COMMENT: WE HAVE NO WAY OF ASSESSING DA GRACA'S ROLE IN THE POLITICS OF HIS EMERGING COLONY. HE IS

A SERIOUS, MILD-MANNERED YOUNG MAN WHO APPARENTLY IS INTELLIGENT AND WELL-QUALIFIED TO PLAY AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN HIS COUNTRY. (HE HAS A DOCTORATE IN ECONOMICS FROM A SWEDISH UNIVERSITY.) HE SEEMED TO BE GENUINELY WELL-DISPOSED TOWARD THE WEST AND WORTH CULTIVATING. HE APPEARS ALSO, HOWEVER, TO HAVE SUBORDINATED HIS ROLE IN THE LIBERATION COMMITTEE TO HIS DUTIES FOR THE GABONESE GOVERNMENT, ALTHOUGH HE SAID HE HOPED TO BEGIN DEVOTING FULL TIME TO THE LIBERATION COMMITTEE IN JANUARY. HE WAS NOT AWARE OF PRESS REPORTS OF PORTUGUESE AGREEMENT WITH COMMITTEE LEADERS IN LIBREVILLE THAT A REFERENDUM ON THE ISLANDS WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY. THAT IGNORANCE MIGHT BE ASCRIBED TO HIS HEAVY TRAVEL SCHEDULE ON BEHALF OF THE GOG (HE SAID HE HAD SPENT ONLY ONE WEEK IN LIBREVILLE IN THE PAST FEW MONTHS) BUT IT MAY ALSO MEAN HE IS OUTSIDE THE MAINSTREAM OF SAO TOME-PRINCIPE EXILE POLITICS. BEAULIEU IS A PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT AND MANAGING PARTNER OF A BUSINESS IN BRUSSELS. HE IS A FRIEND OF DA GRACA'S AND MAY SEE THE LATTER'S POTENTIAL ROLE IN A NEW COUNTRY AS A PROMISING PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITY FOR HIMSELF AND HIS FIRM. RENNER

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